

THE VATICAN AND THE "JEWISH QUESTION"

The Record of the Hitler Period—and After

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IT IS an indisputable fact that during the difficult years of the Nazi occupation, the Catholic faith in Europe gained new vigor. Today, after vying with Communism during the years of occupation as the focus of mass resistance against the invader, and sacrificing martyrs by the thousands, Catholicism is regarded by many as the strongest nucleus of resistance against the influence of the Communist myth.

One of the most important manifestations of the Catholic resistance against the Nazis was the effort to give assistance to the Jews, since persecution of Jews involved for the Church a question of principle—the inviolability of human life. (The matter presented itself differently for the Communists, who, mobilizing all their energies for the total struggle against the immediate enemy, were only moderately interested in the question of principle. Taken individually, they did many wonderful things: but human life *in se* remained for them a secondary issue.) Behind this question of principle, however, lay

EVENTS since 1933 have raised for the Catholic Church, with renewed sharpness, the question of Catholicism's attitude toward the Jews and the "Jewish problem," a question that has always been of great importance to Catholic theology and social doctrine. L. POLIAKOV here tries, factually and objectively, to describe and analyze the position of the Vatican in relation to the Jews in recent history. Mr. Poliakov, research director of the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris, has published several volumes on the experience of the Jews under the Nazis, and continues to devote himself to the effort to understand the genesis and development of the catastrophe that befell Europe's Jews. Mr. Poliakov was born in Leningrad in 1910 and studied at the Sorbonne in Paris. His most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "Human Morality and the Nazi Terror" (August 1950). The present article was translated from the French by Rosa Mencher.

the whole complex problem of the attitude of the Catholic Church towards Judaism. Leaving out the Soviet Union, nearly 80 per cent of the European territory invaded by Germany was under the jurisdiction of the Church of Rome. And thus during the years of occupation the "Jewish question" in all its aspects was placed before the Catholic Church more sharply than it has been since the Middle Ages.

IN THE Middle Ages the role of the clergy was unrivaled in all phases of life. Spiritual and temporal power were inextricably linked together. Because all power in this world was considered as of divine origin, the Church was the source of political supremacy. But this forced the Church to take an active part in worldly struggles; violent conflicts developed between the Pope and the various national churches which were theoretically subordinate to him, and the situation was further complicated by the Pope's exercising temporal sovereign power over the "Church estates" in the center of Italy. The obsolete terms "Gallicanism" and "Josephism" recall the doctrines opposed to papal centralization which were developed in such powerful Catholic territories as France and the Austrian Empire.

The year 1870—when, with the unification of Italy, the papacy lost its temporal sovereignty—began a new stage. By progressive steps the ideological monopoly of the Church had come to an end. On the basis of the increasing secularization of the modern world, secular ideologies competed more and more with the ideology of the Church. This same fact, however, now strengthened the influence of the Vatican over the menaced national churches: by an instinctive movement of solidarity and self-protection, the internal bonds tightened. Even material

progress, by improving means of communication, facilitated the Vatican's control over the ecclesiastical hierarchies of the different countries of Europe and America. By a progressive centralization, the Pope began to exercise a more effective authority over the Church, an authority which some now describe as absolute (the papacy is the only monarchy that is both absolute and elective). But national particularities continue to oppose its centralizing absolutism. A French historian has written: "The Pontiff usually limits himself to confirming the prevailing general opinion, or, at least, to supporting an already powerful current of ideas, lest he be disobeyed."* The Pope's power is strictly moral, with all the limitations—but also all the profound significance—that the term implies.

Faced with the gradual de-Christianization of Europe during the past century, the Church has struggled obstinately to conserve its dominion over the human soul; though the source of the Vatican's authority is moral, no effort is neglected to buttress it by political means. The Pope concluded concordats with the governments of the leading Catholic countries in order to define the rights and field of action of the clergy, and in negotiating these concordats he naturally solicited the aid of those political parties which rested on Catholic support, wherever they existed. Thus the Vatican has been forced to come to terms with the modern world and even to make some doctrinal concessions. A long road has been traveled from the *Syllabus* of 1864 to the *Divine Redemptoris* of 1937; and in the final analysis, the personal talents and temperaments of the successive Popes have been determining factors in the cadence of this evolution.

IT is well known that until a relatively recent time the Holy See regarded all liberal and democratic principles as essentially dangerous and malignant. It required the appearance of powerful totalitarian governments to bring about a change in this attitude

and reveal suddenly the spiritual bonds that lay hidden beneath the apparently profound and irreconcilable differences between liberalism and Catholicism.

Certainly the Vatican demonstrated that it was cognizant of the tremendous danger represented by the dogmas of racist materialism. Pius XI, the courageous Pope who occupied the Holy See from 1922 to 1939, severely condemned Nazism and racism in his famous encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*† of 1937 and made his attitude clear by other symbolic and spectacular demonstrations, such as his departure from Rome at the time of Hitler's visit in May 1939—"The air here makes us sick!" Also, there can hardly be any question that the Vatican was aware of the German plan for instituting a Nazi papacy.‡

†The following quotations may give an impression of the tenor of this encyclical:

"Whoever exalts race, or the people, or the state, or a particular form of state, or the depositories of power, or any other fundamental value of the human community . . . above their standard value and divinizes them to an idolatrous level, distorts and perverts an order of the world planned and created by God: he is far from the true faith in God and from the concept of life which that faith upholds. . . ."

"The bishops of the Church of Christ, 'ordained in the things that appertain to God' (Heb. 5:1), must watch that pernicious errors of this sort, and consequent practices more pernicious still, shall not gain a footing among their flock. . . ."

‡The conception of a Nazi theocracy headed by Adolf Hitler was revealed not long ago in the memoirs of Alfred Rosenberg, published in the magazine *Der Monat* of Berlin, in July 1949; and the internal attitude of leading Nazis towards the churches is shown clearly in the following extracts from a top-secret memorandum of June 1941 from Martin Bormann, head of the chancellery of the party, addressed to the Gauleiters and high dignitaries of the movement:

"The ideas of National Socialism and the ideas of Christianity are irreconcilable. The Christian churches are built on the ignorance of their believers, and strive in every way to maintain this ignorance, for only thus can they conserve their power. National Socialism on the other hand rests on scientific foundations. . . . When we National Socialists speak of faith in God we do not mean by this term, like the naive Christians and their ecclesiastical exploiters, a being in human form seated somewhere in the heavens. We must open the eyes of men and make them see that there exists in the universe, besides our insignificant little earth, an inconceivable number of other celestial bodies, bodies like the sun, and each one surrounded by planets which in their turn are sur-

* *La Papauté Contemporaine*, by Henri Marc-Bonnet (Paris, 1946).

What then led the present Pope, Pius XII, to adopt a less forthright policy than Pius XI? Was it the temperament of a "diplomatic" Pope succeeding a "militant" Pope? Was it an expectation that Hitler might defeat Moscow? Was it excessive prudence? Was it, finally, that supposed "Germanophilia" which was attributed to the Pope as early as 1917 when he was Monsignor Pacelli, papal legate at Munich? One can only guess; few secrets have been so well kept as those of the diplomacy of the Holy See.

The fact is, however, that during Hitler's lifetime the present Pope never clearly condemned the criminal policy of the Third Reich, and that the diplomatic relations between Berlin and the Vatican, although cold and reserved, remained correct. The Concordat of 1933 was never denounced, and it was not until June 2, 1945, one month after the defeat of Germany, that Pius XII found words strong enough to describe the "satanic specter of National Socialism." Such is the

rounded by moons. What we call the all-powerful, or God, is the natural force that makes all these bodies move in their orbits. The belief that this natural force is capable of concerning itself with the destiny of every individual being, of every little terrestrial bacillus, and that it could be influenced by prayers, and other nonsense of the sort, can rest only on a large dose of naivety or on a shameless commercialism. . . . In earlier generations, nations were guided by the Church. The power of the state was limited to issuing laws and ordinances; primarily, the state was an administrative body. Through the intervention of the clergy, the Church exercised the most enormous influence over the lives of individuals, or families, and of the collectivity. What did not suit the Church, it wiped out with unexampled brutality. . . . It lay with the Church to decide whether it would help the state or combat it; the state in fact was dependent upon it. That is why the German emperors' struggles against the Popes always failed. . . . Now for the first time in German history, it is the Fuehrer who holds the spiritual reins firmly in his hands. Through the party and its organs he has made himself—and thereby the German state—independent of the Church. All influences that may interfere with the national development which the Fuehrer with the help of the party has set in motion must be rooted out. The people must be progressively alienated from the churches and the clergy. Obviously, the churches will not fail to struggle against the loss of their power. But they must never recover the least influence over the national destiny. Their power must be broken forever. . . ."

changing course of Vatican policy, which Pius XI in 1929 had defined thus: "When it is a matter of saving souls, we are brave enough to treat with the devil."

AS FOR the Jews, the Holy See, always so well informed, must have been advised early of the fate the Nazis had reserved for them, the real meaning of the "final solution." From that time on, it was purely, as has been stated, a question of principle. The Vatican only remained faithful to its medieval tradition: if the medieval Popes were the originators of many anti-Jewish measures, such as the introduction of the Jewish badge (Fourth Lateran Council, 1215), they also affirmed many times during the course of the centuries that Jewish life was inviolable. According to the ideas of that time, the Jews, persecuted and humiliated as they were, served an essential function: they were the indispensable witnesses to the triumph of the Church, the truth of its faith, and the grandeur and reality of its dogmas. This papal policy was reaffirmed from 1939 to 1945, and the Vatican exerted itself to help the Jews by a thousand different means. Just the same, it is necessary to distinguish between public adoption of a general position condemning Nazism, and the varying character of the silent *de facto* interventions that actually took place in different countries.

To cite a few examples: Pius XII personally put thirty kilos of gold at the disposal of the Roman Jewish community in September 1943, when an exorbitant contribution was exacted from it by the Nazis. All through the nine months of the German occupation of Rome, some dozens of Roman Jews found shelter and protection in the buildings and offices of the Vatican. And this direct aid, accorded to the persecuted Jews by the Pope in his position as Bishop of Rome, was only the symbolic expression of an activity that spread throughout Europe, encouraging and stimulating the efforts of Catholic churches in almost every country. There is no doubt that secret instructions went out from the Vatican urging the national churches to intervene in favor of the Jews by every pos-

sible means. Other communications of this sort were made directly to the civil authorities, as in Hungary and Slovakia. Judging by German diplomatic reports of the time, the cessation of deportations of Jews from Slovakia in the summer of 1942 (and consequently the survival of nearly 25 per cent of the Slovakian Jews) must be attributed to such pressures exerted on Monsignor Tiso, chief of the Slovakian puppet state. But, more generally, the different ways in which the instructions of the Holy See were followed in the East, in the South, and in the West, may perhaps give us an idea of the limits of the real power that the Vatican is able to exert over its dominion—that is, the degree of actual autonomy enjoyed by the national churches.

THE admirable spirit which animated the churches of France, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands, where acts of courage and devotion were innumerable (and should one day be engraved in a "Golden Book" of human solidarity), found in the East, and in Poland especially, only uncertain and isolated echoes. One finds in Poland no counterpart to the courageous protests that the Western cardinals and archbishops addressed to the occupying powers—unless we are to count as an exception one isolated sentence of Sapieha, Prince-Archbishop of Cracow, drawing the attention of the German governor-general, Hans Frank, to the moral corruption that the extermination of the Jews caused *among those who carried out the massacres*: "I shall not enlarge upon so dreadful a fact as the employment of the inebriated youth of the labor service for the extermination of the Jews. . . ." (This terribly ambiguous sentence occurs in a protest addressed to Frank on November 8, 1942.) A similar disproportion is revealed if we compare Catholic activities in the East and West in rescuing victims, arranging for false documents and escape channels, concealing Jews in the convents, rescuing children, etc.

It would carry us too far to analyze the various reasons for this profound contrast, though it may be mentioned that the most

important was probably the difference in the general common attitude towards the Jews in the East and the West. It should be pointed out, moreover, that the desire to make converts played only the smallest role in promoting Catholic activity on behalf of the Jews—contrary to rumors that have been rather lightmindedly circulated. It is true, of course, that converts were made, but it would be the grossest injustice to claim that conversion was the clergy's principal goal.

TURNING now to the sphere of public protests and principled condemnations, it must be said that nothing similar to certain statements of Pius XI (let us recall his famous words: "We are all Semites spiritually. . . .") was said at Rome under the pontificate of Pius XII. If, as has been pointed out, there were some resounding protests made with the Vatican's approval on the local level, the Pope did not consider it wise to add to these protests the authority of his own voice; or if he did make a public statement, it was with such caution that his words had no effect, or were misunderstood.

A characteristic example may be found in the successive reports sent to Berlin in October 1943 by Ernest von Weizsäcker, German ambassador to the Vatican. It was the month when, after the fall of the ephemeral regime of Badoglio, the Germans took over the occupation of the Holy City. On October 16 the SS began to round up the Jews of Rome. Bishop Hudal, rector of the German Catholic Church in Rome, asked the German military command to order the end of these arrests, both in Rome and in the suburbs: "Otherwise, it is to be feared that the Pope might publicly take a position against these arrests, which would lend support to enemy propaganda. . . ." Weizsäcker reported Hudal's request to Berlin, adding: "I am in a position to confirm the reaction of the Vatican to the deportation of the Jews from Rome. . . . It is said that the bishops of French cities where similar events occurred took a very definite stand. The Pope, as supreme leader of the Church and Bishop of Rome, could hardly show himself less zealous

than they, more especially since there are many who are ready to compare the present Pope unfavorably with his more temperamental predecessor. Enemy propaganda will undoubtedly seize upon this incident to disturb our peaceful relations with the Curia. . . ."

This was written October 17, 1943. Eleven days later, Weizsäcker sings an entirely different tune: "Although pressed from all sides, the Pope has not let himself be persuaded to make any public protest against the deportation of the Roman Jews. . . . He has done everything in this delicate matter to avoid straining his relations with the German government. . . . A communiqué published by *l'Osservatore Romano* and written in the style peculiar to the Vatican—that is to say, a style tortuous and vague—declares that the Pope blesses all men, without distinction of nationality, race, or religion, with his paternal solicitude. . . . There is all the less objection to be raised against the terms of this message, in that very few will recognize in it a special allusion to the Jewish question."

ONE may still argue in this case, or in similar cases, that public protests would have brought no help to the victims, and might even have produced contrary effects. There was, for example, the tragic story of the converted Jews of Holland, where in July 1942, by mutual agreement, the Protestant and Catholic churches planned to make a public protest against the deportations. As a result of German threats, the Protestant churches at the last moment refrained from reading the message, whereas the Catholic churches went through with the plan. Consequently, the Jews who had converted to Catholicism were arrested and deported, whereas the Protestant converts remained in Holland. It is painful to have to state that at the time when gas chambers and crematoria were operating day and night, the high spiritual authority of the Vatican did not find it necessary to make a clear and solemn protest that would have echoed through the world; and yet one cannot say

that there may not have been pertinent and valid reasons for this silence.

On November 29, 1949, Pius XII received in special audience a group of seventy Jewish refugees, former inmates of concentration camps. "Your presence here," the Holy Father said, "stands as witness of the gratitude of the many men and women who, in perilous times for them, and often under the menace of imminent death, learned by their own experience how the Catholic Church and her true disciples, in the exercise of charity, know how to raise themselves above all the narrow and arbitrary limits created by human egoism and racial passions."

The examples that have been given show how much these words were justified. No statistics will ever tell us how many lives were saved by the Church; in any case, it is certain that a great many of the Jewish survivors of the Nazi occupation benefited from its aid at some moment in their odyssey. Many traces of this courageous activity remain, and certain Judeo-Christian associations—notably, the *Amitiés Chrésiennes* of France—perpetuate the spirit of those days of heroic solidarity. The associations constitute a new development in Europe: for the first time points of view are freely exchanged between men who emphasize elements that unify them rather than keep them apart.

WE HAVE spoken so far of the attitude of the Vatican towards what will go down in history under the Nazi euphemism of "the final solution of the Jewish question"—that is, extermination. But the troubled period of the Nazi occupation permits us also to clarify another aspect of the attitude of the Vatican today towards Judaism and the Jews.

The "final solution" was only the end result of a mass of discriminatory and restrictive measures carried out step by step by the Nazis. These preliminary measures were enthusiastically welcomed and imitated by the various Quisling regimes that multiplied under the German aegis. (When it came to the "final solution" itself, those regimes were more backward.) Deprivation of civil rights, economic restrictions, *numerus clausus*, the

wearing of the Jewish insignia—all these discriminatory actions corresponded to measures that had been encouraged by the medieval Church on the basis of those ideas about the role of the Jews which we have already discussed. In the course of the 19th century these discriminations seemed to have disappeared; but now they were revived, and by an ideology that in its essence was as anti-Christian as it was anti-Semitic. A serious question thus presented itself: what attitude would be taken by the Vatican? Had there been any change in the ideas of the papacy in this sphere? Through an indirect approach made possible by the opening of the archives of the Vichy regime, I shall attempt, as objectively as possible, to throw some light on this important question.

The strongly Catholic government of Marshal Pétain, having promulgated a group of regulations concerning Jews known as the "Statut des Juifs" (June 1941), and planning to enact further measures of the same sort, was anxious to be informed as fully as possible about the attitude of the Holy See. Pétain instructed Léon Bérard, French ambassador to the Vatican, to make the necessary inquiries, and in August 1941 Bérard reported that nothing had been said to him at the Vatican "which might be interpreted as criticism or disapproval by the Pope of the legislative and regulatory acts in question." Continuing his inquiries, the ambassador a few days later sent to Vichy a very detailed and careful summary of "the position of the Holy See in regard to the Jewish problem."

This report is divided into several parts; in the first part, entitled "The Church and Racism," Bérard points out what we have already noted: that "there is a basic and irreconcilable opposition between racist theories and the doctrines of the Church." Having given the reasons for this, he concludes: "However, the teachings of the Church on the subject of racist ideas do not by a great deal permit us to deduce that it necessarily condemns every specific measure taken by any state against what is called the Jewish race." But it is the second part of Bérard's

report—entitled "The Church, the Jewish Problem, and Anti-Semitism"—which is by far the most interesting.

THE importance of this section of Bérard's report is so great that I shall quote it *in extenso*: "One seeks in vain in the canon law, in theology, and in the papal edicts any clear set of precepts that could be regarded as a system of laws covering Judaism and the Jewish religion. Indeed, it is not easy to find any well-defined body of doctrine on this matter at all.

"The principle that appears first, and is most definite, is that in the eyes of the Church a Jew who has been validly baptized ceases to be a Jew and disappears into the 'flock of Christ.' At the same time, one should not too hastily conclude that religion is for the Church the only element that distinguishes Israel from other nations. The Church does not at all consider the Jews a mere 'spiritual family' such as is composed, for example, by the Catholics or the 'reformed' Christians among us. It recognizes that among the distinctive features of the Jewish community there are certain peculiarities, not *racial*, but *ethnic*. The Church has recognized this fact for a long time, and has always taken it into consideration.

"We know by history that the Church has often protected Jews against the violence and injustice of their persecutors, and that at the same time it has relegated them to the ghettos. One of the greatest of churchmen, St. Thomas Aquinas, has left teachings that cast light on this attitude. St. Thomas deals with the Jewish problem—incidentally, but in very clear terms—in *Summa Theologica*, IIa, IIae, Q. 10, Art. 9, 10, 11, and 12. The following is a résumé of his doctrine: The Jews must be tolerated in the exercise of their religion; they must be protected from religious coercion; their children must not be baptized by force without the consent of their parents. On the other hand, while proscribing any policy of oppression of the Jews, St. Thomas nevertheless recommends that suitable measures be taken to limit their activities and restrict their influence. It would be

unreasonable in a Christian state to allow the Jews to participate in the government and thus subject Catholics to their authority. It follows from this that *it is legitimate to forbid them access to public office, and it is also legitimate to admit them into the universities and the liberal professions only on the basis of a fixed proportion (numerus clausus).*

"As a matter of fact, this practice was strictly adhered to during the Middle Ages, and to that end a Lateran Council prescribed that Jews should distinguish themselves from Christians by a *peculiarity of dress*.

"On the basis of this summary, we should now be in a position to decide whether the Statut des Juifs promulgated by the French government is or is not in conflict with Catholic principles, and in which particular points it might be in conflict. But this interpretation will be facilitated if we examine first the reactions of the Holy See to the regulations concerning Jews which were put into effect by the Fascist state about three years ago."

THE section that follows—"Difficulties between the Holy See and Italy in Regard to the Fascist Legislation concerning Jews"—is less interesting from our point of view. Bérard mentions the Vatican's opposition to the prohibition of marriages between converted Jews and "Aryans," and adds: "We need fear no differences of opinion of this kind, since the French law concerning the Jews contains no stipulation comparable to the one that caused the difficulties between the papal authority and the Italian government." In the conclusion of his report, Bérard reassures the Marshal once more: "As someone in authority at the Vatican has told me, they do not intend to pick a quarrel with us over the Statut des Juifs. However, two wishes have been expressed to me by the representatives of the Holy See, with the obvious desire that they be submitted to the Chief of State:

"(1) That no stipulations concerning marriage be added to the law on the Jews. It is on this point that we would run into difficulties of a religious nature. The Vatican was

greatly disturbed when Rumania adopted on this capital point certain rules of law borrowed from Fascist legislation.

"(2) That precepts of justice and charity be taken into account in the application of the law. Here my interlocutors seemed especially concerned about 'the liquidation of business in which Jews own interests.'"

So much for the Bérard document. Published two years ago in the French press (*Le Monde Juif*, *L'Ordre*, etc.), it has brought forth no denial nor stimulated any comment. The reader will understand if, after discussing in these pages the glorious record of the Catholic Church in its efforts to save Jewish lives from the Nazi murderers, I too prefer to add no comment.

THE war once ended, the Jewish problem in Europe lost some of that acuteness which I have tried to describe, and its main focus shifted to Palestine. The analysis presented above may perhaps have prepared us to grasp certain aspects of the policies pursued by the Vatican in Palestinian matters.

During the heroic period of the Balfour Declaration, the apostles of Zionism were already trying to win the support of the Holy See, and an audience granted to the Zionist leader Nahum Sokolow in 1917 by Pope Benedict XIV seemed a promising sign. But in 1922, when the British Mandate with its "national home" came before the Council of the League of Nations for ratification, the Zionists became aware that they could not count on any effective support from the Vatican. The president of the Council of the League, Quinones de Leon, was a Spaniard, and the unanimous agreement of the members of the Council, which included the representatives of Brazil, France, Belgium, and Italy, was indispensable to ratification. Only through the untiring exertions of Chaim Weizmann, who appealed to De Leon's sense of honor by evoking the tragedy of Spanish Judaism, was a favorable decision obtained. "The sacrifices of the martyrs of the Spanish Inquisition bore fruit four hundred years later," Weizmann said afterwards.

During the years that followed, when the

destiny of Palestine became an element of British imperial policy, and the conflict between Jews and Arabs had in appearance been circumscribed, one finds no hint of the adoption of a position by the Vatican—which, as we know, often carries its policy of prudence and discretion to extremes.

After the great catastrophe that befell European Jewry, and the many tragic events still so vivid in all our memories, Great Britain renounced the Mandate, and at the beginning of 1947 the Palestine question was placed in the hands of the United Nations, almost half whose members (twenty-seven out of fifty-seven) were Catholic countries or countries with Catholic majorities. The United Nations appointed a commission of inquiry, which in the fall of 1947 proposed a plan for the partition of Palestine, including as one of its provisions the internationalization of Jerusalem—that is to say, the creation of an enclave including the Holy City and its environs that would be administered by an international authority. At the time, the representatives of Israel supported this plan, which the Arab delegations unanimously rejected. That the Catholic Church should adopt an attitude of absolute neutrality in a conflict between Jews and Arabs, and that of all possible solutions the Church should prefer one that would assure the internationalization of the Holy Places, putting them in the hands of an authority in which the Catholic position would be largely represented—nothing could have appeared more logical. But the Vatican still refrained from any indication of its views.

IT WAS only after the United Nations had proved powerless to impose its solution upon the parties concerned, and when blood had begun to flow in the Holy Land, that the Pope let his voice be heard. Two weeks before the expiration of the Mandate and the proclamation of the State of Israel, the Pope issued his encyclical *Auspicia Quaedam* (May 1948), in which he wrote:

"We mean to refer to the Holy Places of Palestine, which have long been disturbed.

"Indeed, if there exists any place that ought to be most dear to every cultured person, surely it is Palestine, where, from the dawn of antiquity, such great light of truth shone for all men. . . .

"We desire, therefore, Venerable Brethren, that supplications be poured forth to the Most Holy Virgin for this request: that the situation in Palestine may at long last be settled justly and thereby concord and peace be also happily established."

At the moment when this encyclical was published, the Arab armies were preparing to take the offensive and the cause of Israel appeared greatly in jeopardy. But one does not find in this text any precise indication of the status that the Pope considered desirable for the Holy Places—most of which, we should remember, are in the Old City of Jerusalem.

In the weeks that followed events moved fast. The Old City fell into the hands of the Transjordanian Legion. The New City—the specifically Jewish section—was encircled and cut off from the rest of the country, and its fate appeared more and more in doubt. Count Bernadotte, the mediator appointed by the United Nations, undertook negotiations for a compromise, as a result of which he published his proposals of June 27, envisioning in Paragraph III* the inclusion of Jerusalem in the territory to be given to the Arabs. But the possibility thus raised that the Holy City might become an Arab city brought forth no reaction from the Vatican.

The Vatican made a clear statement of its position only after the situation had been completely reversed, following the campaign in the Negev, the break-through at Latrun, and the raising of the siege of Jerusalem, when the fortunes of war seemed to have turned definitely toward the Jewish side.

*The text of Paragraph III of Bernadotte's proposal is as follows: "Inclusion of the city of Jerusalem in Arab territory with municipal autonomy for the Jewish community and special arrangements for the protection of the Holy Places." (As for the last point, the proposal of special protection for the Holy Places was to be made again by the Israeli delegation at the United Nations eighteen months later.)

Then on October 24, 1948, the Pope issued a second encyclical, *In Multiplicibus*:

"... It would be expedient, as a better guarantee for the safety of the sanctuaries under the present circumstances, to give an international character to Jerusalem and its vicinity, where so many and so precious reminders of the life and death of our Savior are to be found.

"It is also necessary to assure with international guarantees both the right of free access to the Holy Places scattered throughout Palestine and the freedom of religion and the respect for customs and religious traditions."

This exhortation was renewed and further particularized several months later (April 15, 1949) in the encyclical *In Redemptoris Nostri*:

"We cannot help repeating here the same declaration, encouraged by the thought that it may also serve as an inspiration to Our children.

"Let them, wherever they are living, use every legitimate means to persuade the rulers of nations, and those whose duty it is to settle this important question, to accord to Jerusalem and its surroundings a juridical status. . . .

"Nor can We omit to point out that all rights to the Holy Places which Catholics during many centuries have acquired and time and again defended valiantly and which Our Predecessors have solemnly and effectively vindicated should be preserved inviolate."

IT is significant that the official bulletin of French Catholicism, *Documentation Catholique*—a publication usually objective and measured in tone, and which many times, especially since the war, has reminded its readers of the papal declarations and encyclicals condemning race hatred and anti-Semitism—thought it appropriate to follow the publication of the encyclical *In Redemptoris Nostri* by an "appeal" entitled "Christianity Faces the Palestinian Drama." This was sent out by the Catholic news agency Fides, and amounted, it must be said, to noth-

ing less than an exhortation to aggressive anti-Semitism. The "appeal" may be judged by the following quotations:

"... Although the orthodox [Jews] adhere to Zionism while identifying the person of the Messiah with the whole body of the Jewish people, a Hebrew elite is being created in the *kibbutzim*, where under a collectivist materialism that rivals the achievements of the Communists, they are 'breeding' and educating a new race. Amid Semitic disorder and the arrogant exultation of triumphant vengeance, shock troops and assassins without scruple are being created. . . .

"We who, after having been systematically blinded and deceived for many months, have been able at least in part, through careful inquiry, to get at the truth of events in Palestine, can only subscribe to a belief that has already been frequently expressed: 'Zionism is a new Nazism.' . . .

"Only firm and determined opposition can awaken Israel from its delirium and permit the establishment of tolerant mutual relations. To our mind it is but Christian charity to bind the lunatic in his rage."

I shall mention here only in passing that, contrary to the insinuations of this article, perfectly satisfactory cooperation had in the meantime been established among all the various and numerous Christian establishments in the Holy Land, as is testified by various declarations made on the scene by Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox ecclesiastics.

Let me add that another number of this same *Documentation Catholique* contains the following very judicious statements from the pen of Father Paul Demann: "... But how can one speak of the Jewish problem in 1948 without speaking of Palestine? How can one remain indifferent to the unhappy events in the Holy Land? And from another point of view, an attitude taken for or against the State of Israel must have a fatal and obvious effect on the attitude taken towards the Jews in general." (July 17, 1949.)

IN AN Apostolic Exhortation of November 10, 1949, addressed to the bishops and faithful of the world on the eve of the Plen-

ary Session of the United Nations, Pius XII again took up the question of the Holy Places: "... Today, while the future status of Palestine is being discussed in public assembly, We, in keeping with the duty of Our Apostolic Office, urgently appeal to all who glory in the name of Christian to unite with us in more fervent prayer so as to obtain from Almighty God gifts of peace, love, and justice for those Holy Places. ..."

Is it permissible to suggest that certain steps—more definite but also more discreet—were undertaken by the Vatican at the same time? The General Assembly of the United Nations took up the question on December 9. There is an echo of the Holy See's influence on its decision in the public statement of Dr. Rudolph Munoz, the Argentinian delegate: "Our feeling on that aspect of the problem is the same as that which guided other Latin American countries, and we cannot in any respect disregard the dictates of our religious spirit."

The result of the vote on this issue took no account either of the opinion of the Conciliation Committee (United States, France, Turkey), which had delivered its report shortly before the meeting of the General Assembly, or of the last proposals of Mr. Sharett, the Israeli Foreign Minister, who had suggested the creation of an international authority whose sphere of activity would be limited to the actual sanctuaries of the three religions concerned. The Assembly voted thirty-eight to fourteen (United States and Great Britain opposing), with seven abstentions, for the internationalization of Jerusalem and its environs, which were to become a *corpus separatum* administered by the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. The thirty-eight votes in favor of the plan included ten Moslem countries and nineteen Catholic, plus the Soviet bloc, which for obvious reasons favored a plan of internationalization that would offer the Soviet Union new possibilities of penetration into the Middle East.

The task of drawing up a statute in conformity with this decision was left to the Trusteeship Council, which in April 1950

approved a plan that in its general outline held to the old proposals of the United Nations Inquiry Commission of 1947.

IT WILL be recalled that those proposals were formulated as temporary solutions during a period of conflict, at a time when the termination of the British Mandate had created a situation of disorder and confusion, and that they were based essentially on a projected establishment of frontiers that would have made Jerusalem an enclave within Arab territory. But now, when the situation has been stabilized as a result of the dramatic struggles so sharp in our memories, and when there is no longer any interruption of territorial continuity between Jewish Jerusalem and the rest of the territory of Israel, such proposals make no sense economically, politically, or juridically, attempting as they do to wrest from a sovereign state belonging to the UN an essential part of its territory. It is obvious that the Israeli citizens of Jerusalem will never consent to give up their dearly purchased nationality and their political rights in order to become the subjects of a territory under international administration. Equally inevitable is the opposition of Transjordan, which has absorbed the territory of the Old City. Is the UN to mobilize an international army in order to impose its plan by force?

In the face of this impasse, the General Assembly of the UN, which has the task of reaching a final decision, has shown no anxiety to settle the question, which during the session of last June was postponed until the session of this fall. The new proposals of the government of Israel, repeating the suggestion of limiting international control to the Holy Places alone and guaranteeing their safety and free access to them, as well as protecting the rights of the various religious communities of Jerusalem, appear to constitute the soundest solution and the only practical one.

The Vatican nevertheless maintains its position unchanged, as may be seen from an article published in *l'Osservatore Romano* of September 15 last. This article states very

clearly that there has been no change in the aims of the Catholic Church as they have been defined by papal encyclicals and pontifical exhortations, and that only "a *corpus separatum* under firm international administration would guarantee security." In passing, the article discharges a few arrows on the subject of "the news from diverse sources (but originating in general from South American capitals in the wake of a Jewish mission) diffusing the rosiest hopes. . . . It would appear [to judge from these reports] that all obstacles have been smoothed out and that Catholics no longer have any cause for concern." These remarks apparently refer to the plan presented by the government of Israel. The article concludes: "We do not know what the next session of the Assembly will or will not do, but we know that for Catholics, the only possible solution of the problem of the Holy Places would be their being placed under international administration in accordance with the conditions set forth by His Holiness Pius XII."

THERE is room, perhaps, to inquire whether the two different aspects of the traditional and dogmatically unchangeable attitude of the Holy See towards the Jews, as seen in the light of the analysis and the quotations presented in this article, are not in their profound essence incompatible, producing in practice real contradictions. Let us conclude with one example relating to an important question of current concern.

No one any longer doubts that among the many factors that make up, to borrow a phrase of the Holy Office, "that form of hatred which is called anti-Semitism,"* a considerable role is played by certain unconscious sentiments, certain impressions surviving from childhood. Now, among the experiences of the Catholic child is a prayer that is repeated by all Catholics on Good Friday, in which "perfidious Jews" and "Jewish perfidy" are referred to. The Latin text says *perfidi Judaei*. Philologists and Latinists know that, in spite of their apparent simi-

larity, the Latin word *perfidius*, unlike the English word "perfidious," means simply infidel, without faith, referring to those who refuse to accept the Christian faith. (This fact has been recently confirmed by such specialists as E. Peterson [*Ephemerides Liturgicae*, 1936] and J. Oesterreicher [*Theological Studies*, 1947].) One may imagine the large and unfortunate influence that this linguistic confusion can exercise over the feelings of hundreds of millions of Catholics.

Certain efforts were made during the past few years—efforts in which such organizations as the International Association of Christians and Jews and Les Amitiés Chrétiennes participated, and with which Catholic personages of high rank associated themselves—to obtain a decision on the interpretation of these passages in the Good Friday prayer from the highest competent authority, the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The following is the statement given by the Sacred Congregation (June 10, 1948):

"In the two prayers by which the Holy Mother Church in the course of the solemn prayers of Good Friday implores the mercy of God for the Hebrew people also, there occur the words *perfidi Judaei* and *judaica perfidia*. The question has been raised: what is the exact sense of these Latin expressions, especially since in various translations of the prayers into modern languages used by the faithful these words have been rendered by expressions that have appeared offensive to the said people.

"The Sacred Congregation, consulted on this matter, finds it necessary only to say the following:

"In translations into modern languages, expressions meaning 'infidelity' and 'infidel in matters of faith' are not objectionable." (*"Sacra haec Congregatio, de re interrogata, haec tantum declarare censuit: Non improbari, in translationibus in linguas vulgares, locutiones quarum sensus sit: Infidelitas, infideles in credendo."*)

Here again, one must perforce abstain from any personal judgment as to the practical effect of a decision formulated in such terms.

*Decree of the Holy Office, March 25, 1928.